

Amendments to the Specification:

Page 1, before line 1, insert:

Cross Reference to Related Application

This application is a 35 USC § 371 National Phase Entry Application from PCT/JP2004/010099, filed July 15, 2004, and designating the United States.

Please replace the last paragraph bridging pages 4-6 with the amended paragraph:

As for the property b., because the fine particulate silver powder according to the present invention shows a high dispersibility never shown by the conventional silver powders, "aggregation degree" as an index of showing this dispersibility is used. The "aggregation degree" as used in this specification is the value represented by D_{50}/D_{IA} using the above-mentioned average particle diameter D_{IA} of primary particles and the average particle diameter D_{50} by laser diffraction scattering particle size distribution measurement method. Here, D_{50} is particle size at 50% ~~weight~~ volume accumulation obtained by laser diffraction scattering particle size distribution measurement method, and the value of this average particle diameter D_{50} is not by directly and truly observing the diameter of the powder particles one by one but it can be said that an average particle diameter by assuming an aggregated powder particle as one particle (aggregated particle) is calculated. This is because powder particles of a real silver powder are usually considered not to be so-called monodisperse powder in which each individual particle is completely separated but in a condition in which several powder particles are aggregated. However, it is usual that the value of average particle diameter D_{50} becomes smaller as less aggregation of powder particles is present, and they are more approximate to monodisperse. D_{50}

of the fine particulate silver powder to be used in the present invention is a range of about 0.25 μm to 0.80 μm , and a fine particulate silver powder is provided having an average particle diameter D_{50} of the range which has not been obtained at all by a conventional production method. The laser diffraction scattering particle size distribution measurement method as used in this specification is performed by mixing 0.1 g of fine particulate silver powder with ion-exchange water, and dispersing it with an ultrasonic homogenizer (a product of Nippon Seiki Seisaku-sho Co., Ltd., US-300T) for five minutes and measuring with a laser diffraction scattering particle size distribution measuring apparatus MicroTrac HRA 9320-X 100 type (a product of Leeds & Northrup company).